



Generating Ideas for the
Development of Healthy
Food and Drink Products with

Creative Ideation

 **Interreg**
Atlantic Area
European Regional Development Fund



 **CAHFES**

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1. The Value Of Ideas

Why ideas vary and how they are valuable in the development of healthy food and drink products

Ideas Are Business Assets

- **Your unique and actionable ideas are key assets for your business.**
- A creative and original idea might be just the distinctive feature that allows you to succeed in the market.
- To gain maximum benefit from your ideas you need to keep both your eyes and your minds open and focus time and energy on proactively searching for new opportunities.
- In this training module we will explore some creative ways you could use to generate ideas for the development of healthy food and drink products.
- There is also a follow up training module which focuses on prioritising and managing your **Sparkle Ideas**, and will take you through the next steps in developing your ideas.

An Introduction to Creative Ideation

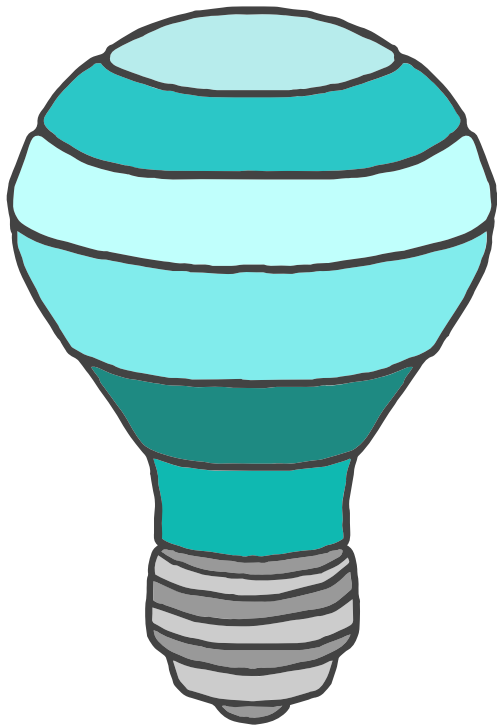
“Creative Ideation” refers to the process of generating original ideas in response to given open-ended problems*. It is a complex art, and there are entire business and academic disciplines dedicated to the subject. Not to mention a host of books, blogs, academic papers and videos talks.

In this training module we will explore some creative ways for generating ideas to support the development of healthy food and drink products and face potential challenges.

In this module we will focus on:

1. Introducing you to some of the basic concepts behind idea generation
2. Suggesting some helpful techniques to support generating creative ideas for your development of healthy food and drink products

Where Do Ideas Come From ?



Neural networks within the human brain fire unique thoughts



Cultural context & existing knowledge of individuals



Interaction with people of diverse backgrounds
& experiences



Boosted by open, inquisitive mindsets and
a willingness to explore beyond the comfort zone

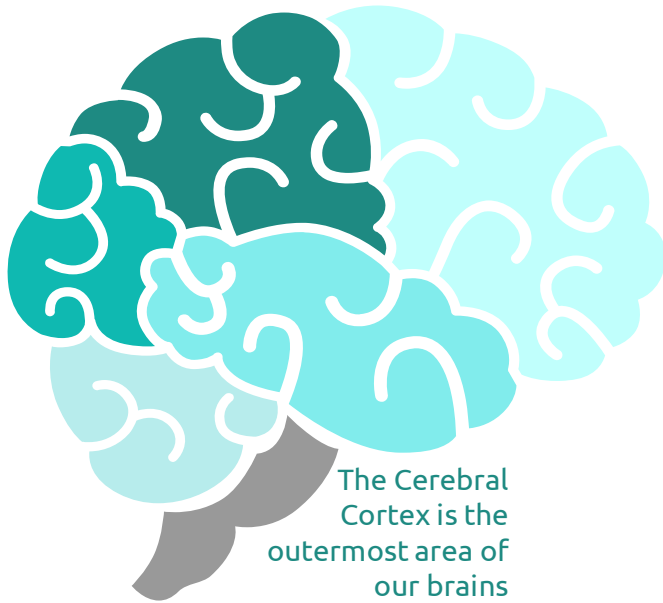


With time set aside for generating & incubating ideas



And an environment that is tolerant of experimentation or risk
taking and accepts that not all ideas will be successful

Our Complex Interconnected Brains



The Cerebral Cortex is the outermost area of our brains

There is no single part of our brain that controls creativity; it occurs due to complex interactions across its various segments.

Frontal Lobe

Is the site of our planning, decision making, working memory, judgement, self-awareness, reasoning, problem solving and also our motor movement

Cerebellum

Is important in how we learn motor skills. It processes information from our sensory system & spinal column, regulating our voluntary movements such as posture, balance, coordination and speech.

Temporal Lobe

Controls how we comprehend language, recognise faces and has memory and emotional functions

Occipital Lobe

Processes visual information from our eyes and is important in interpreting information from reading

Parietal Lobe

Manages our sensory perception and integration, gives us spatial awareness including awareness of our own bodies in the space around us

How Our Brains Affect Creative Ideation

Our “Rational” Brain

Our pre-frontal cortex has been called our “logical” or “rational” brain as it deals with cognitive processes, handling information, aligning this with knowledge already stored in our memories to interpret and contextualising any new inputs we receive.

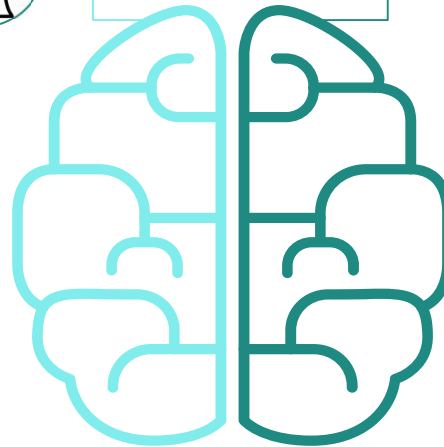


Help or Hinderance ?

Whilst this function is obviously very important, the brain is designed to minimise the energy and effort we need to survive – so it looks for shortcuts, quickly “typecasts” information causing us to make assumptions and fall back on previous experiences.

Although helpful to allow us to navigate each day without succumbing to exhaustion, this can be a barrier to creativity as it prevents us seeing new opportunities or viewing the world in creative and innovative ways.

Therefore we need ways to overcome this trait.



Our “Emotional” Brain

Bordering our cerebral cortex are a collection of structures collectively known as our Limbic system. These areas of our brain control our emotions, motivations and instinctive responses to situations

Help or Hinderance ?

In terms of creativity, this limbic system allows us to tap into deep emotions and may reveal ways to attract and appeal to customers, motivating them to buy our new products.

However, because areas of our brain could be said to “feel” rather than “think” and are largely non-verbal, this sometimes makes it difficult to explain and share our responses with others.

Critically, if participants in idea generating sessions feel uncomfortable, threatened or worried about being criticised, they will instinctively close down” or disrupt the process.



2. Ideas In Practice

How ideas can be used within a food business and managed to support product development

Why Might You Need New Ideas ?

New Products

To expand your sales opportunities for example by appealing to new customers, replacing products at the end of their lifecycle, exploiting seasonal or on trend occasions.

Cost Savings

As competition becomes more fierce in a maturing market, your competitive advantage can be lost and sectors become commoditised. Reducing your costs can help prevent profit margins being squeezed.

Improving or Reformulating Products

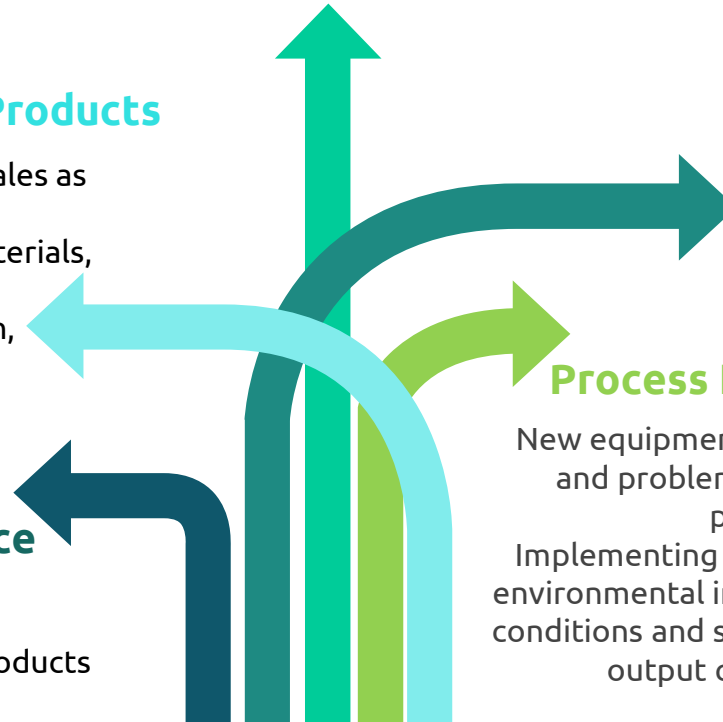
To ensure you are protecting & growing sales as the market evolves for example new market trends, technologies, raw materials, increased competitor activity, changing customer demands or legislation, new nutritional recommendations.

Process Improvements

New equipment, new techniques, new knowledge and problem solving can all help you bring your products to market more efficiently. Implementing new processes can reduce negative environmental impacts, improve employee working conditions and staff retention, as well as expanding output capacity and increasing profitability.

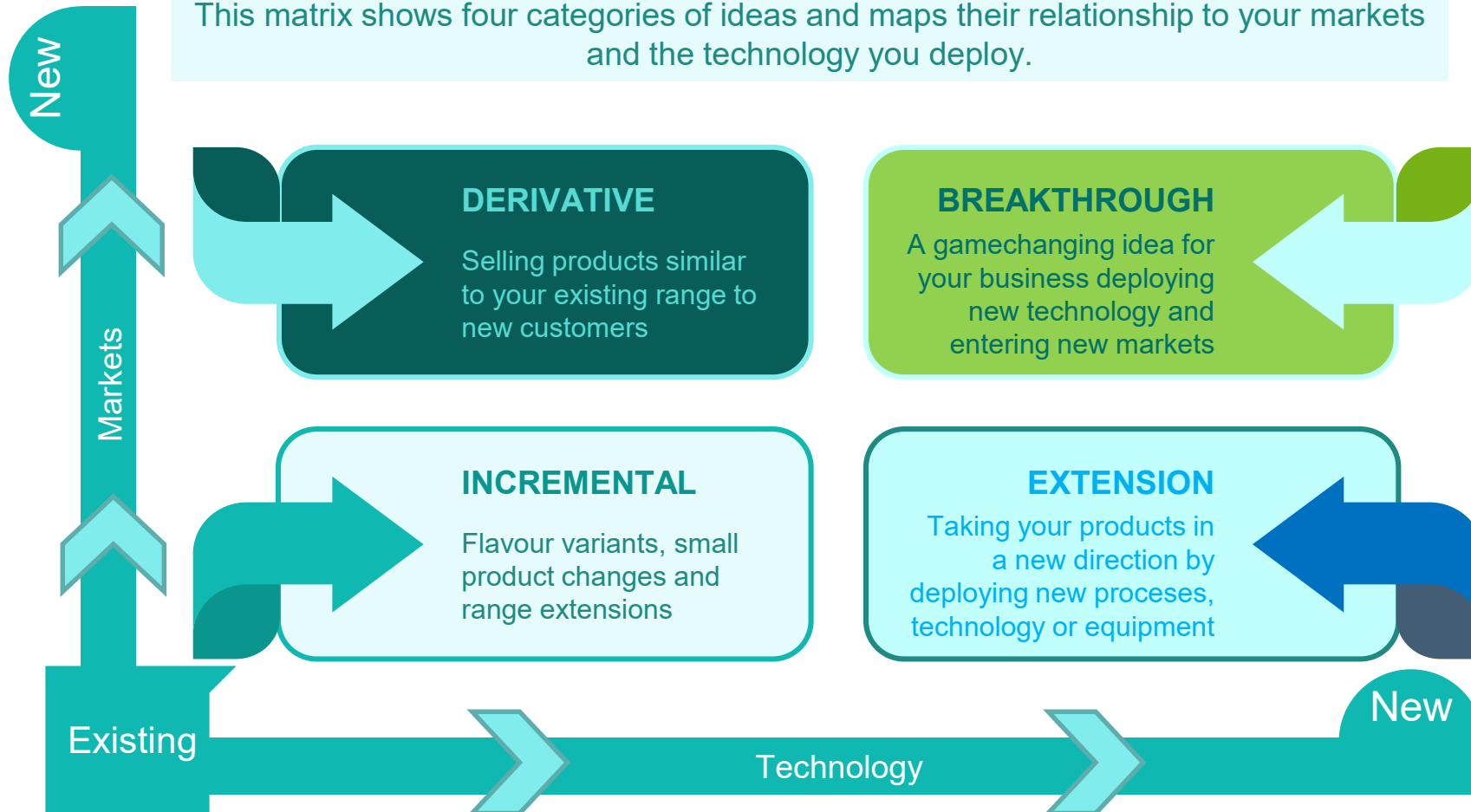
Improving Customer Experience

Your innovative ideas may extend beyond product composition and improve how customers interact with and enjoy your products boosting brand loyalty and repeat sales.

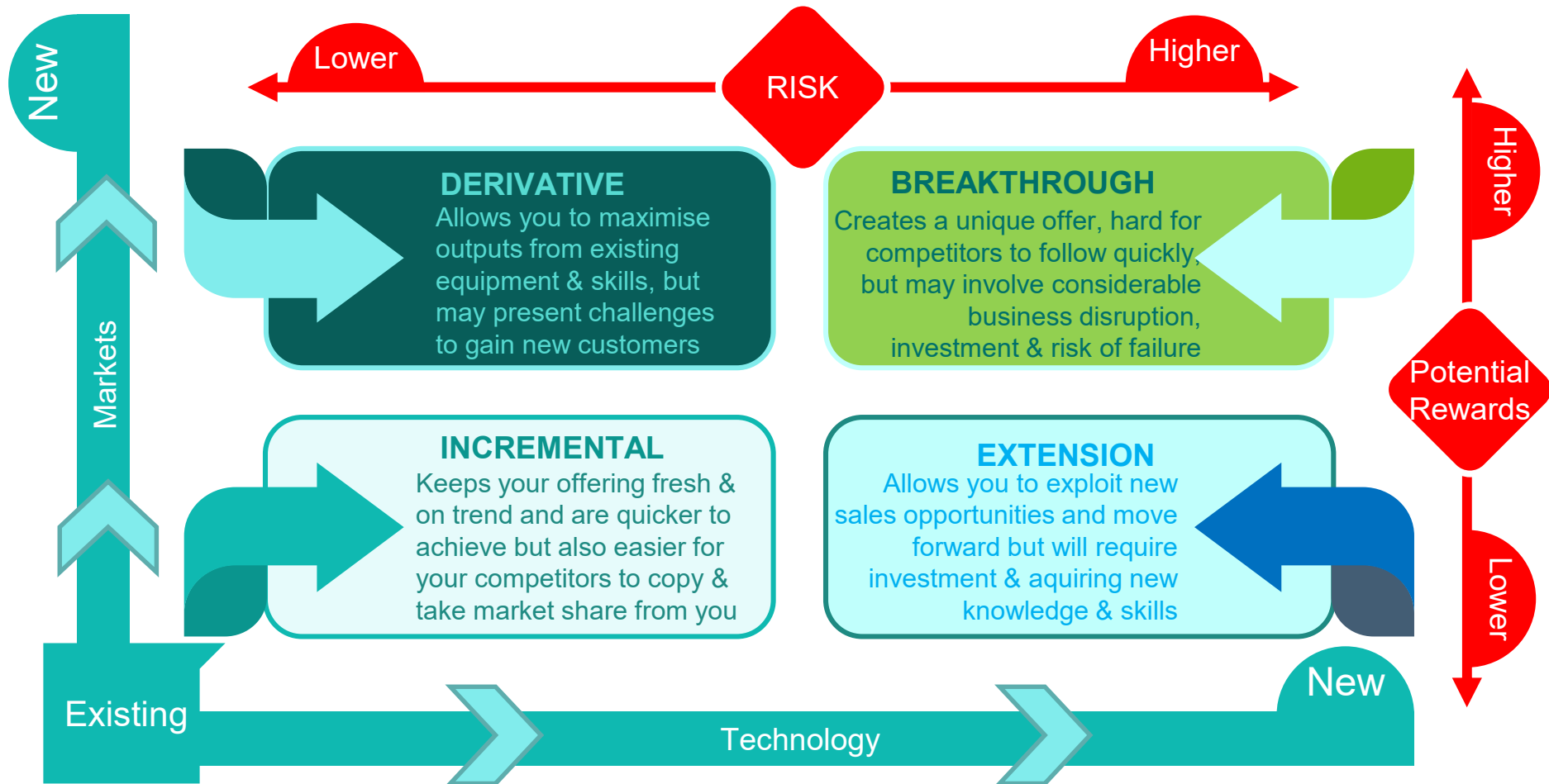


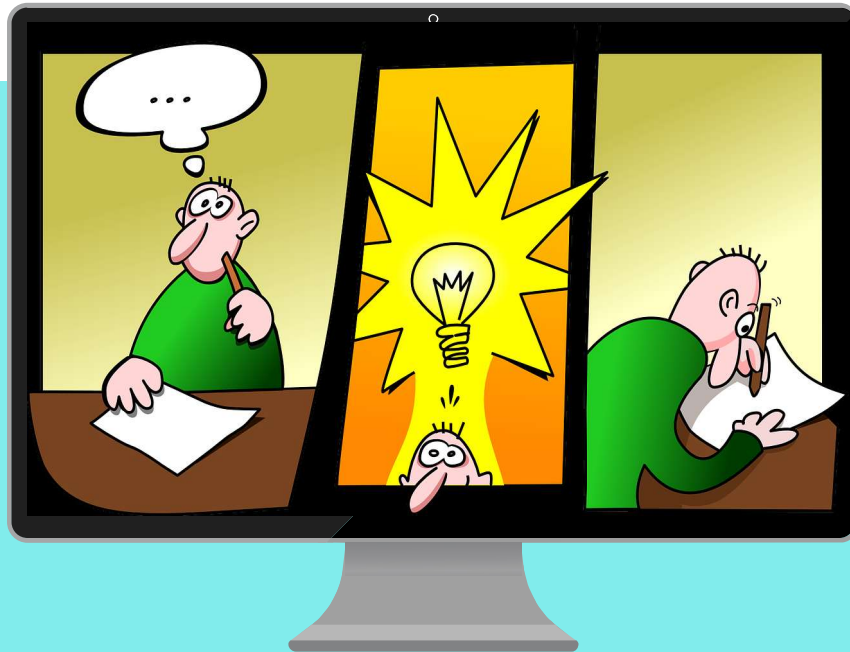
Types of Ideas You Can Use Within Your Product Strategy

This matrix shows four categories of ideas and maps their relationship to your markets and the technology you deploy.



Risks Levels & Potential Rewards of Different Types of Ideas





What Type Of Ideas Are You Looking For ?

What type of ideas you are seeking to generate will relate to your product strategy (see the Product Strategy training module), investment and business growth plans.

Understanding what type of ideas you are looking for will influence:

1. the idea generation techniques you use
2. who you get involved in the process
3. the time you allocate
4. the complexity of the process

Idea “Funnel” Process

Your ideas should progress through a “funnel” by which numerous diverse ideas are generated at the “wide” start of the funnel but are filtered and reduced as you progress them to launch.

1. Create a pull of ideas.
You must ensure enough volume of ideas at the beginning of the ideation process



2. Filter
You must assess, filter and prioritise the ideas in the pull to ensure their feasibility.

Through the filtering process you will be in a position to progress the ideas that are more appealing and with strong evidence of potential.

3. Progress
At the end of the process you will have developed the idea that is most appealing and with strong evidence of sales potential.

We have more helpful training available :

- Techniques for this process of idea selection can be found in the **Sparkle Ideas** training module.
- The methods for progressing concepts along the Development Critical Path are addressed in **the Product Development Training Programme**

Sourcing Your New Ideas

Check what competitors do.

Visit a variety of stores and food service outlets.

- What is happening in different market sectors?
- Could you apply any principles to your own healthy product ranges?



Keep posted about the latest innovations.

Trade exhibitions, street food venues, food markets and pop up food events can all show you where new innovation is trending.

Keep your eyes open!

What do people talk about?

Online research or subscribing to interesting podcasts and newsletters could suggest new avenues to pursue and provide you with the latest information on consumer trends in the healthy food and drink sectors.



Ask!

You can bring a group of people (employees, consumers groups) together to generate & explore new concepts. *This training module will outline some helpful techniques to generate good ideas.*

Innovation Is A Business Task Like Any Other

Idea generation is a key step in the innovation process and benefits from a planned approach just as you would assign to logistics, production or your marketing strategy

1

Innovation Strategy

Incremental, Extension, Derivative or Breakthrough?



Deciding what to do & not to do

2

Market Knowledge

Mapping competitor activities & market trends



What's happening in your market?

3

Expertise

Using a mix of internal & external knowledge



You will not know everything in house!

4

Team

Combining the best people with a strong team spirit



People participate fully when at ease

5

Where & When

Providing an inspiring environment



Set aside time for creative thought

Practicalities for Creative Idea Sessions



Time

You will need to allocate enough time to generate your product development ideas.

Think ahead and request that your chosen participants put this time aside in their diaries.



Venue

Choose a venue where participants will be comfortable - no-one thinks well if they are too cold, too hot, thirsty or uncomfortable!

Encourage them to set their day to day concerns aside during the session & avoid distractions and interruptions



Inspiration

To boost the quantity and quality of ideas you must provide stimulation and inspiration for participants.

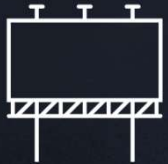
This could be choosing an inspiring location, putting up visual images or information around the room, or bringing along physical items that will provoke new ideas or ways of thinking.



3. Techniques to Generate Development Ideas for Healthy Food & Drink Products

Methods you can use to stimulate ideas in a structured and productive way

Some Tools That Can Be Used



Post-its and boards are always a good choice when working together in the same space!

On-line tools such as Miro Boards, or ideanote create a collaborative environment to mimic physical meetings

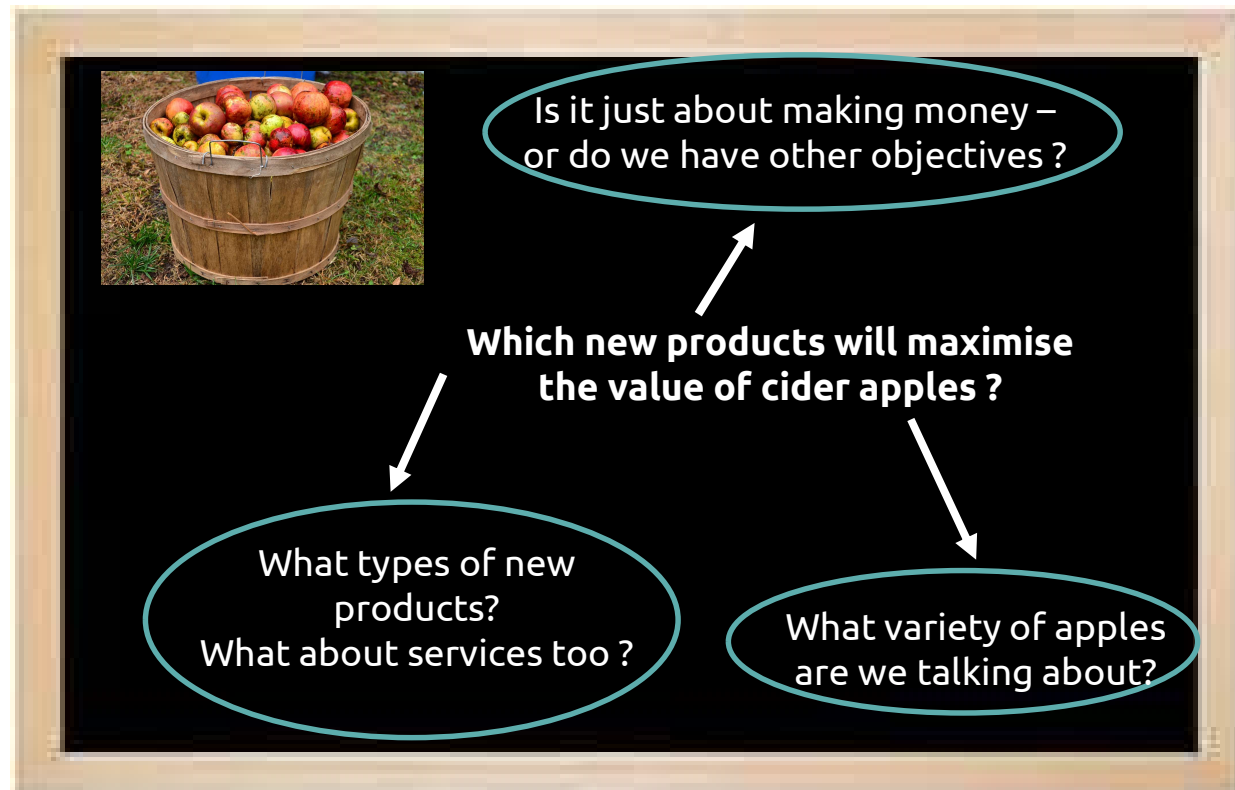


Setting the Context for the Creative Challenge

Before beginning to collect ideas, it is important to clearly define the goal of your Ideas Session.

You could write the creative challenge on a board, and ask people react to the different words there.

In this way everyone in the group becomes clear about the precise objectives of the session.



Warm-up Techniques to Begin the Creative Work

The idea is to “break the ice” to make the attendees at the session feel comfortable and prepare them to get creative.



Example 1: Using an imaginative card game.

Working in pairs, each participant chooses a card and tells their partner which ingredient it makes them think about.

The pair then have to combine the inspiration from both cards to imagine a new recipe inspired by the two cards.

Example 2: Choose a particular object (such as a spoon, bottle etc.) and ask the participants

“What’s that for you, except a bottle?”

Example of responses might be gym weights, hammer, cocktail shaker etc.





Classic Brainstorming

Requires – defined topics to be explored, gathering of inspirational information & materials & good group interaction

Participants are given a theme or topic and asked to come up with as many ideas as they can in a defined amount of time.

Setting the first portion of time for silent, individual thinking, then asking each person to share their thoughts with the wider group helps prevent the contributions from more reticent, quieter people from being missed.

Ideas can be captured on flip charts, wipe boards or sticky notes – both physical and virtual options exist.

Everyone present has to “suspend criticism” and not dismiss ideas as “bad”.

Equally the group should not just hone in on the first “good” idea – but building on ideas can be useful.

Once all ideas have been captured, try splitting into smaller groups to discuss, group the ideas into categories & consider their merits.

Share your market knowledge & customer insights to set the context

Choose an inspiring location – or at least one away from day to day distractions

Why not ask participants in advance to bring “props” and inspiring materials along?

Don't lose all your good work!

Visual materials work well as they stimulate different areas of the brain than words and writing

Ask participants to set aside mobile phone and focus on the task

Ideas can spark from seeing disparate items together in unexpected combinations

Think about how you will capture ideas – saving notes, taking photos etc



Reverse Brainstorming

Requires – willingness to think in an unconventional way & good group interaction

In Reverse Brainstorming you are asking the participants to think of all the things that they would NOT want or expect from a product or process.

This can free everyone's mind from the pressures of searching for "good" ideas & stimulates more diverse outputs. So for healthy food and drink development for example, this might involve asking people to suggest all the ways in which food and drinks can be unhealthy, unappetising or unappealing.

Use the same techniques to conventional brainstorming in asking for private, individual ideas to be listed first of all, then sharing these as a group to encourage everyone to participate fully.

Once you have your lists of ideas, turn them on their heads, now the group defines the opposite in each case. These "reverse" ideas may suggest fresh, creative concepts that you would not have revealed otherwise.

Might any customer research you have done reveal what is liked & not liked?

Making the session lively & fun will provoke better participation

Encourage interaction & building on ideas

Embrace the point at which the flow of ideas starts to slow down

Even your customer complaints might be a useful reference?

Ensuring the mood of the session is non-judgemental frees people's thinking

Delving into & expanding on ideas can "wring" the most out of them

Now you are applying more creative "brain power" & can push into new innovative ideas

Brainwriting: An Alternative to Brainstorming



Brainwriting (developed by Leigh Thompson & Loran Nordgren) encourages the creation of new ideas and, ultimately decision making, in a written form. It allows any participants who are rather timid or shy to express their ideas & creates more time to consider what and how to express points of view.

6-3-5 Method

6 people writing 3 ideas in 5 minutes on a card.

Each person starts with a card; the process finishes when everyone has contributed to all the cards.

The Pool

Write down as many ideas as you can come up with and leave them in the centre of the table!

Restricted Brainwriting

The facilitators should distribute the cards with some ideas, for participants to add alternatives and additional ideas inspired by what has already been written.

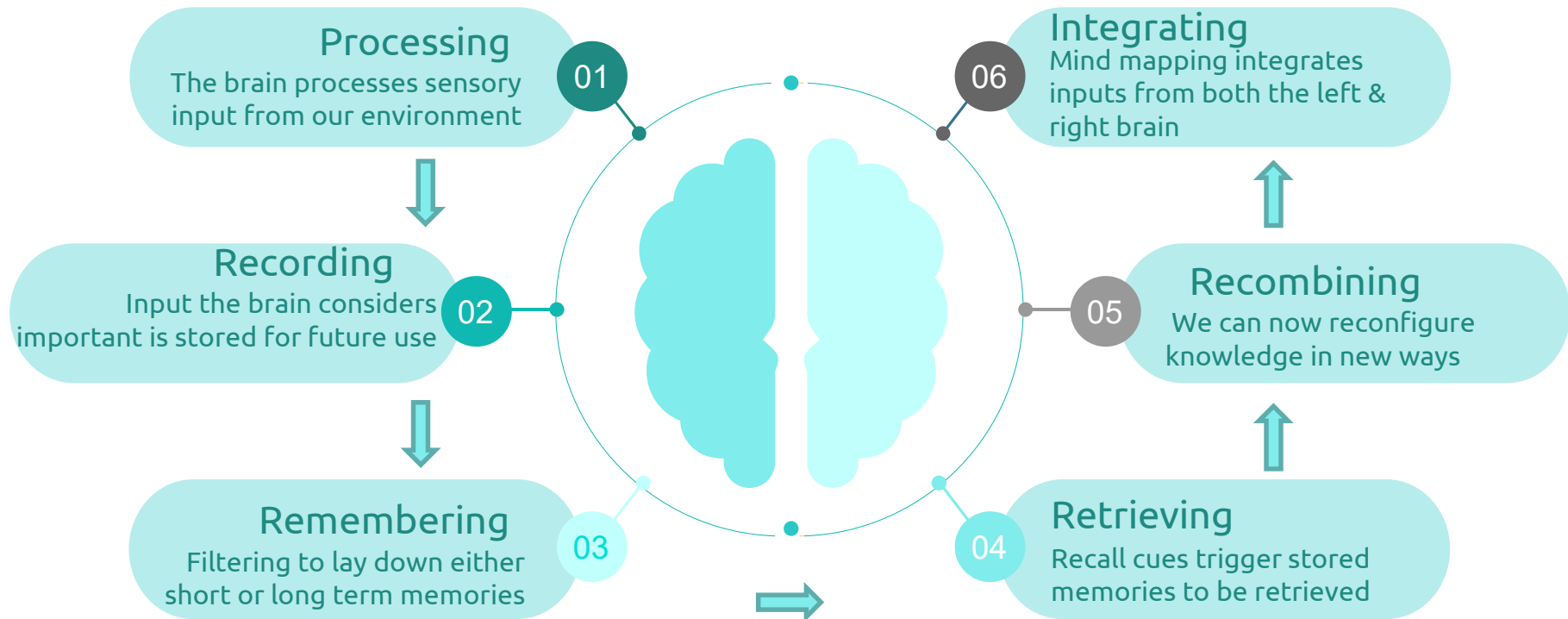
Collaborative Writing

In this option, you position have a board or paper where everyone can access it. Then encourage everyone to add ideas over a period of time (e.g. a day, a week...)

All of this can be done either physically or using on-line tools. The benefits are that all the written ideas will be accessible to all participants and can therefore be used to vote on forming a key part of the decision-making process.

Mind Mapping For Idea Generation

Invented by Tony Buzan in the 1960's, Mind Mapping remains a popular technique in which visual representations of thoughts, knowledge and ideas are created, thus allowing the functions of the right and left sides of the brain to work more effectively together to maximise creative outputs.



Mind Mapping For Idea Generation

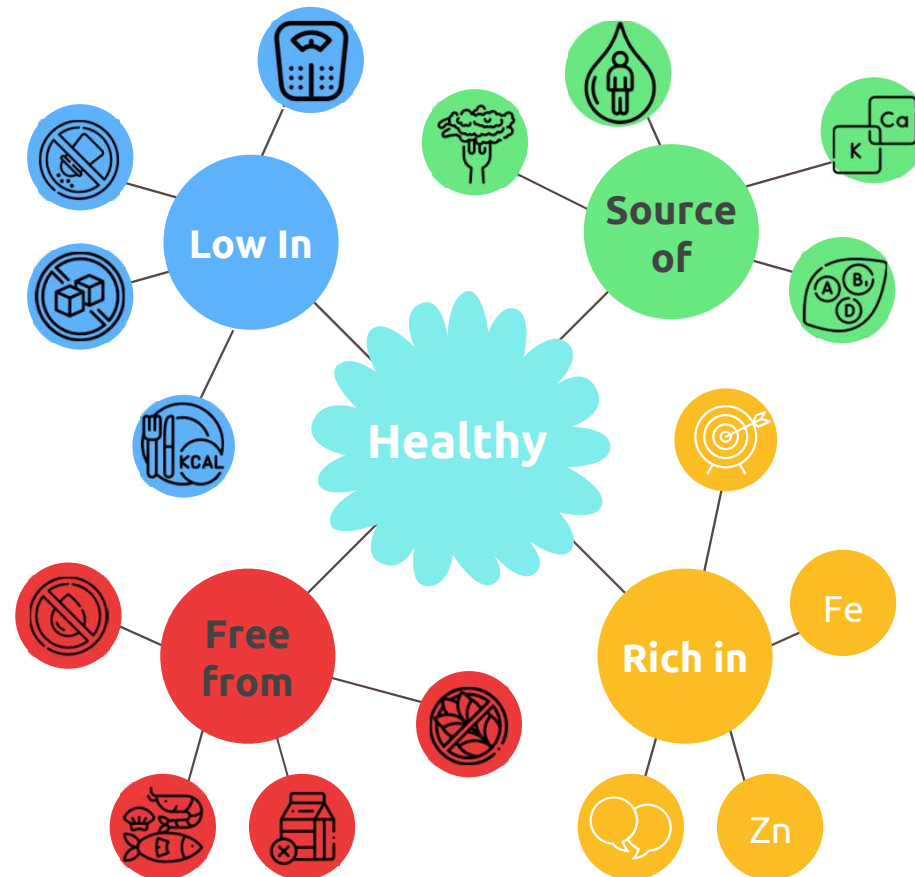
Mind mapping uses visual elements which allow improved mental function

Ideas are captured by 1 or 2 "Key Words"

A "Mind Map diagram" is devised which shows how one thought has led to another

Sketching symbols simulates the brain and increases memorability

Using colours to group different "threads of ideas" allows them to be understood more clearly



Storyboarding Ideas

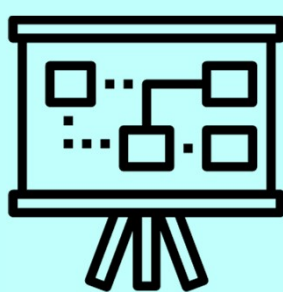
Sketching & drawing taps into creativity from a different part of the brain than written or spoken words, allowing ideas to arise that might not be evoked through discussion or written reports.



Free Flow of Ideas

Start with sketching single thoughts or ideas about your chosen topic

—
Don't worry about these being random or scattered at this stage !



Making Connections

Now link or group these sketches to find common themes

—
What patterns are forming that you could pursue ?



Create A Narrative

Create the story behind how your customer will discover & explore your product

—
How could you delight your customer at every stage of their experience ?



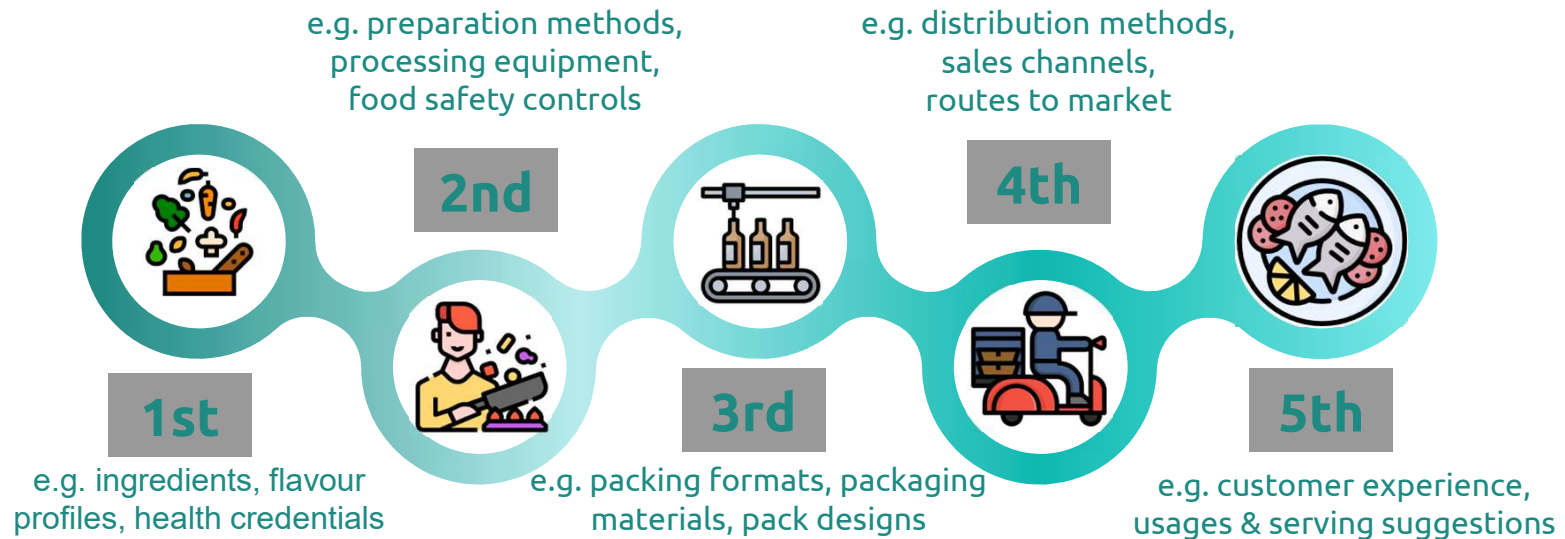
Use Your Story

Draw on the insight you gained from your storyboard to design your product

—
Why not use this insight in your sales pitch and marketing plan ?

Pass & Build

In the “pass and build” method of idea generation participants must take an idea which is passed to them, then add their own element. So an idea which starts as a simple, single concept benefits from many sources of inspiration and becomes more fully formed, well evolved and developed in the process.



Six Thinking Hats



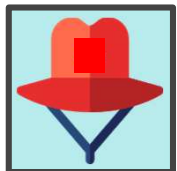
WHITE HAT : FACTS

Available **facts and figures**
Objective figures, identifies knowledge gaps.



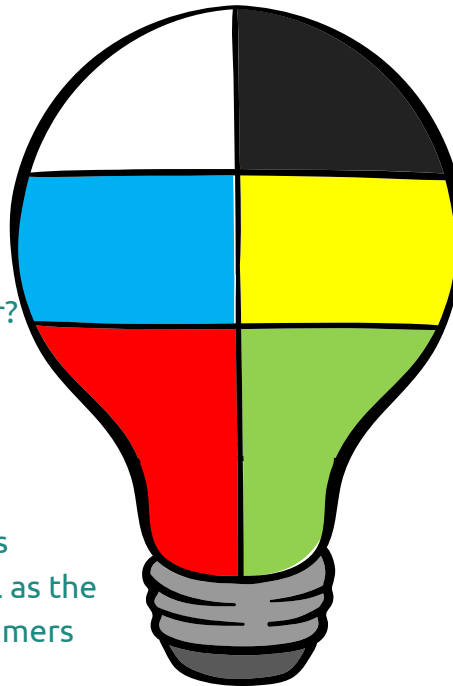
BLUE HAT: PROCESSES

How have been things done so far?
How could they be done in the future?



RED HAT: EMOTIONS

Intuition & feelings of participants towards the new concepts as well as the emotional reactions of your customers



BLACK HAT: CAUTIONS

Weaknesses & potentially negative outcomes
NEVER START WITH THIS HAT!



YELLOW HAT: BENEFITS

The positive elements, takes an optimistic view of possible outcomes



GREEN HAT: CREATIVITY

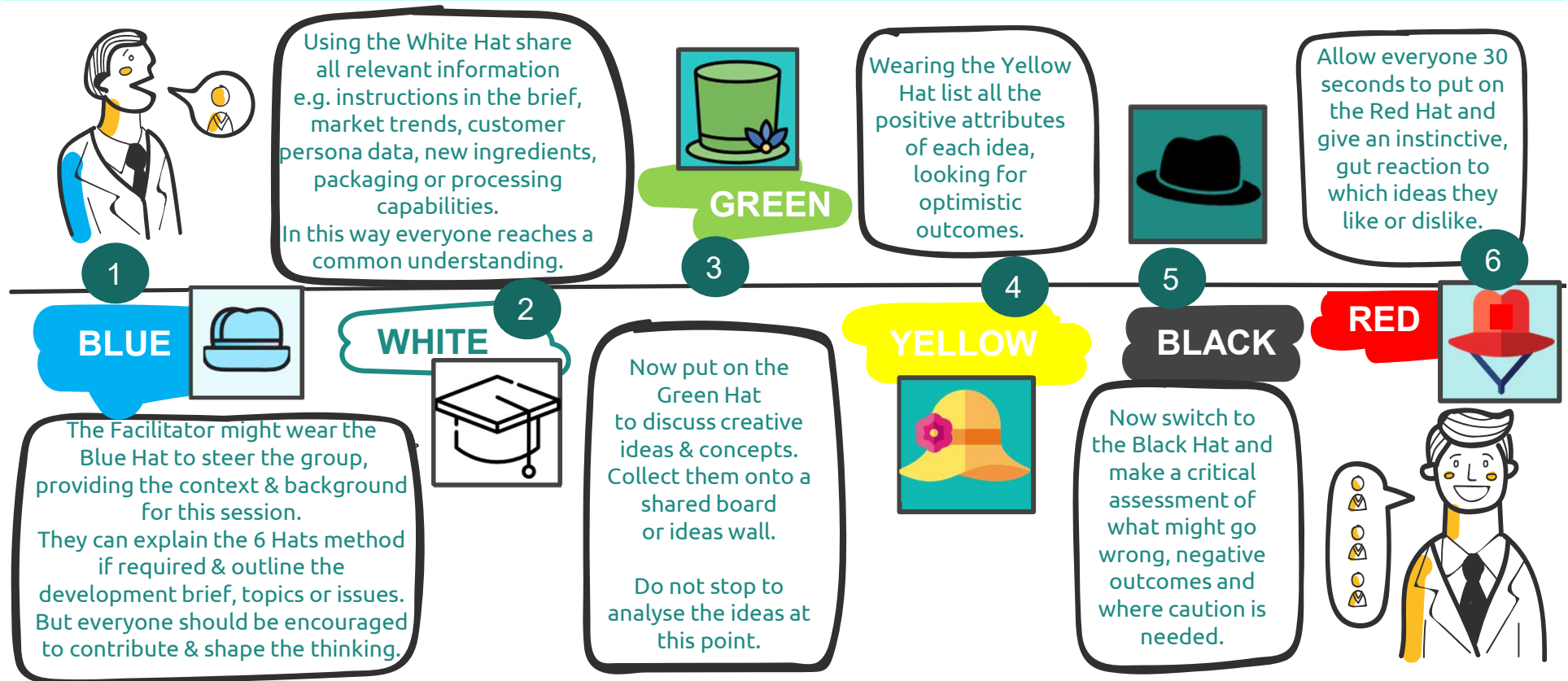
Unstrained thinking, challenging preconceived ideas & introducing new ideas



Developed by Dr Edward De Bono, originator of the concept of "lateral thinking", the "6 Thinking Hats" is a psychologically based technique that can be applied to numerous business situations from product innovation and process improvements, to strategic planning and performance reviews. Participants are asked to "wear" each hat in turn and thereby look at issues from a balanced range of perspectives.

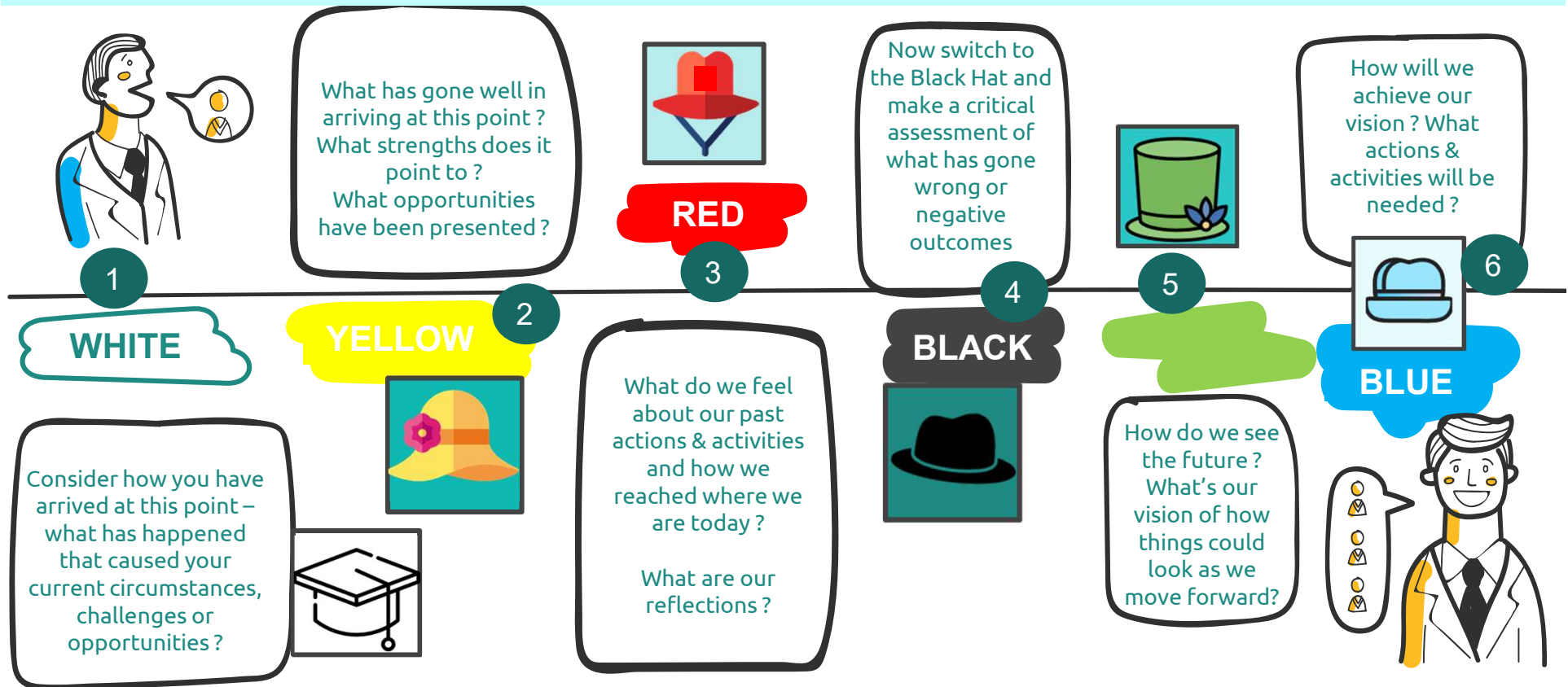
Six Thinking Hats Technique Applied To Idea Generation

This technique aims to trigger participants to look at problems from new perspectives, deliberately stepping outside their usual thinking. As everyone thinks in a different way in turn, any conflict, which might occur because of inherently differing points of view, is redirected, channelled and ultimately reduced. The merits of both logical, evidence based thinking and emotional responses are also acknowledged.



Alternative Six Thinking Hats Technique

This technique aims to trigger participants to look at problems from new perspectives, deliberately stepping outside their usual thinking. As everyone thinks in a different way in turn, any conflict, which might occur because of inherently differing points of view, is redirected, channelled and ultimately reduced. The merits of both logical, evidence based thinking and emotional responses are also acknowledged.



Six Hats Variations for Healthy Product Development

Customer Personas

Try using your customer personas as your “hats”



So for example if your target customers are

1. Busy working parents
2. Active retired people
3. Commuters
4. Campers
5. Hikers
6. Gym Goers



Structure your session to project yourself inside their minds & experiences and explore what they might need from your product & how to delight them.



New Perspectives

Or project yourselves to be people with different skills or perspectives

For example these people might all take a different approach to food development – what could you learn by putting yourself in their shoes ?

1. A dietician or nutritionist
2. A famous TV Chef
3. An environmental activist
4. A restaurant owner
5. A food scientist
6. An allergy sufferer

This approach may require some research before the session but could be very insightful.



Crowdsourcing For Product Development

“Crowdsourcing” was only named in the mid-2000’s but the concept has been used by governments & businesses since at least the 1700’s to address innovation challenges.

The technique’s strengths are its ability to tap into “the wisdom of the crowd”, expanding the pool of expertise and “brain power” directed at a problem, issue or opportunity and providing a wide range of opinions and experiences.

Applied to product development, the technique can be used not only to generate ideas, but also to gauge the relative popularity of concepts through asking participants to vote for favourites.





Pro's and Con's of Crowd Sourcing

01 **Faster & Smarter**

A large number of ideas can be generated quickly

02 **Promotes Positive Engagement**

Can boost brand loyalty as customers feel involved with your business

03 **Affordable**

Offering a prize or incentive is likely to be less expensive than hiring expertise

PRO's



CON's

01 **Difficult to Control**

It can be hard to control the direction, relevance & quality of ideas generated

02 **Life of Its Own**

May evolve in a way you had not anticipated and be a risk to your reputation

03 **IP is Hard to Protect**

Once in the public domain it may be hard to regain your intellectual property



Inspiration Cards



When you have the “seed” of an idea in mind,
why not print & cut out use these inspiration cards to explore different
alternatives and directions that you could take with your development ?

Or make your own version of the cards ?

Don't forget to refer back to what you know about your
customers' needs and desires !



Add an Asian inspired twist



Increase the Dietary Fibre content



Reduce the cost price by 10%



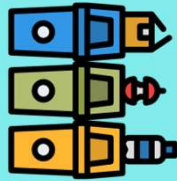
Use a provenanced or named ingredient



Appeal to Gen Z consumers (born 1996-2010)



Capture a Street Food vibe



Use recyclable packaging



Create a "On the Move" version



Devise a
"Seasonal
Special"
version for
Christmas



Devise a
"Seasonal
Special"
version for
Summer



Position the
product
in the
Premium Tier



Remove
Allergens



Appeal to
Convenience
Seeking
consumers



Be able to
legally make a
Nutrient Claim



Put a Modern
Twist on a
Traditional
Favourite



Let the
Consumer
feel involved

Random Input

Objective: To generate ideas from a randomly chosen word

Duration: 10 minutes

Method:

Look for a word at random (in a book, dictionary),

Write down all the associations that come to mind from this word

Then write down all the ideas that come to mind are related to the original question

This is a very helpful and quick method to revive the production of ideas during the workshop if energy is flagging !



Unusual Object



Objective:

To explore areas that have not yet been tackled from original angles.

This method is a good way to restart the creative process when the participants seem to have exhausted their stock of ideas.

Duration: 10 minutes

Method:

The bag should contain several objects which have no connection with the subject for which you are generating ideas.

A participant chooses an unusual object at random from the bag.

By looking and discussing this random object together, new ideas come to the participants and feed the stock of collected ideas.

Awakening the Taste Buds

Objective: Tasting or smelling food to spark new ideas.

Advice: Choose foods that are colourful, noisy when eaten, and have a variety of textures.

Duration: 10 minutes

Method:

The facilitator suggests that the participants taste a food to awaken sensations, provoke a sensory response and lead the group to explore new horizons.





We hope that you have found this training module a useful and helpful support to your healthy food and drink innovation.

This training module is one of a number of training opportunities, organised into themed training programmes to support SME's (small & medium sized enterprises) in the participating regions of Wales, Northern Ireland, Ireland, Spain, Portugal and France to successfully bring new and reformulated healthy food and drink products to market.

The training was created by the partners within the AHFES project which is a quadruple helix Atlantic area healthy food eco-system for the growth of SME's funded by the European Union under the Interreg Atlantic Area Funding Programme.

This programme promotes transnational cooperation among 36 Atlantic regions of 5 European countries and co-finances cooperation projects in the fields of Innovation & Competitiveness, Resource Efficiency, Territorial Risks Management, Biodiversity and Natural & Cultural Assets.

For more information about other training available [please click here](#).



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Acknowledgements

* Creative Ideation - Definition taken from here:

<https://www.frontiersin.org/articles/10.3389/fpsyg.2018.02529/full>

The source: Fink, A., and Benedek, M. (2014). EEG alpha power and creative ideation. *Neurosci. Biobehav. Rev.* 44, 111–123. doi: 10.1016/j.neubiorev.2012.12.002

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